Department of Labour

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia Department of Labour
1999-2000 Business Plan

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PLANNING CONTEXT

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour marked 66 years of service to labour, management and the general public in 1998. The act that established the department was passed on March 31, 1932. The department's primary role is one of "acting in a regulatory capacity," to ensure compliance with its various statutory and regulatory obligations. The strategic goals of the department of Labour are derived from our administrative responsibility for 17 Acts and 55+ supporting sets of regulations which govern health and safety in the workplace, fair wage compensation, employment standards, effective labour/management relations and Public Safety (Buildings and Equipment).

The Department is currently staffed by 165 persons in nine offices across the Province.

In 1999 / 2000 legislative reform will continue in the Occupational Health and Safety and Public Safety areas of the Department. In keeping with our quality program, public consultations, promotion and educational training are major components of all new legislative / regulatory initiatives within the Department. Major Initiatives in the coming fiscal year include:

- Adopt new regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation covering
  - Occupational Health and Safety Committees
  - Underground Mining
  - Diving
  - Temporary Workplace Traffic Control
  - Transfer of certifications to Department of Education and Culture
- Introduce a new Fire Prevention Act
  - Electrical Regulations
  - Fire Safety Regulation
- Implement new Power Engineers and Crane Operators Regulations

- Begin review and development of new regulations covering Boiler and Pressure Vessels and Elevators and Lifts

High Level Budget Allocation Table

Major Program Area	Allocation ('000) 1999-2000

Occupational Health and Safety Administration, Field Services, Central Services, Blasters Board, Coal Miners Examination Board, OH&S Council	6,782.9
Public Safety Administration, Boiler Safety Inspection, Elevator and Amusement Safety and Stationary Engineer Board	1,676.9
Fire Marshal's Office Administration, Inspection Services, planning, and Fire School Grant	1,328.0
Conciliation Services	797.1
Labour Standards	915.9
Adjudications Labour Relations Board, Labour Standards Tribunal, Pay Equity Commission and OH&S Appeal Panel	705.8
Workers' Advisers Program	1,837.0
Assistance Programs Workers' Compensation Board Assistance Program	1,310.0
Administration (Other) Office of the Minister & Deputy, Business Services and Research	1,446.0
Recoveries	5,759.6
Total Labour (Net)	11,040.0

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Vision:

Our Vision is to develop a diversified culture that supports a respectful relationship between employers and employees, and their right to a healthy and safe workplace.

Safety in the workplace makes for productive employees, profitable businesses, community prosperity and, ultimately, an improved economy.

The Department of Labour envisions a proactive and preventative culture in which Nova Scotians put safety first--in their homes, workplaces, buildings and places of amusement and recreation. We support the development of national and international standards so our businesses are able to compete worldwide.

The Department supports innovation and the development of effective alternate dispute resolution mechanisms. Our people will be well-trained and have access to the resources they need to ensure timely, objective, client-focused service to the people of Nova Scotia.

Mission

To promote and protect employment rights and the safety of people and property.

Core values

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour is guided by the principles of integrity, objectivity, fairness and respect for our clients and staff. We are committed to using consultative and innovative approaches, focusing on shared responsibility and providing quality services to our clients.

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STRATEGIC GOALS

- Improve front-line decision-making and customer service through training, teamwork and the application of appropriate technology.

  1) Ensure adequate training is provided to all new and existing staff members to ensure they have the skills and decision-making abilities required to do their jobs.

  2) Complete IT needs assessment and implement the training required to apply departmental technology.

  3) Improve turnaround times for key decision making processes.

  4) Complete implementation of the Licences, Permits and Approvals Report.

  5) Continue the process for transfer of trade licences to the Department of Education and Culture.

  6) Improve access to Labour information databases available on the Internet.

- Reduce the accident/injury /fire rates in the province.

- Develop communications that increases awareness of the Department's mandate and initiatives.

  1) Develop a communications plan that builds on the social unacceptability of negligence in the area of workplace safety, stressing the impact on families and the power of prevention.

  2) Use a consultative process involving client groups, such as the Labour Management forum, to review and revise the List of Arbitrators and the process of appointing arbitrators.

  3) Design new brochures on Preventative Mediation Programs, the First Collective Agreement program and Options to Arbitration.

  4) Prepare communications materials for all Divisions that focus on the Department of Labour's key messages and create a common visual identity for the department.

5) Create plain language communications strategies for each new legislative, regulatory or program change.

6) Partner with other provinces to expand the reach of public awareness programs.

7) Develop and maintain quick access to Departmental initiatives through the Web site.

- Create a management culture characterized by cross-divisional support, resource sharing and partnership with external organizations.

1) Combine administration and staff of key ABC's to ensure greater economy and sharing of resources.

2) Partner with other departments to support our services in field offices and under serviced areas.

3) Utilize the WCB and other service providers wherever possible to enhance service.

4) Promote secondments and resource sharing throughout the department to enhance staff job skills and meet client needs.

5) Cooperate with other departments on project development, eg. Justice's Central Registry Project; the Provincial Library's Virtual Union catalogue, etc.

- Ensure comprehensive approach to preparations for Year 2000 that focus on technological and safety requirements for the Nova Scotian workforce.

1) Complete preparations for internal technological changes and any changes to business processes to ensure all staff can meet their program duties on January 1, 2000.

2) Coordinate with other Government Departments in preparing for the Year 2000.

- Harmonize our legislative requirements to national and international standards to ensure maximum safety and effective compliance for business.

1) Reduce the red tape and confusion over conflicting standards by adopting wherever possible harmonized standards in regulations.

2) Implement performance based standards in the National Fire Code and other codes as they are developed.

- Provide effective dispute resolution mechanisms that enhance client satisfaction and improve government services.

1) Combine administration and staff of key ABC's to ensure greater economy and sharing of resources.

2) Commence consultation on revisions to the Labour Standards program to enhance turnaround times and customer satisfaction.

3) Promote the delivery of preventive mediation programs and information sessions to clients.

4) Implement the recommendations related to the Department of Labour from the Reports of the Select Committee on Workers Compensation and the Auditor General.

- Continuously improve and validate the services we deliver to increase public and staff satisfaction.

1) Implement the recommendations regarding Low Voltage Electrical Installations as they apply to the Department of Labour.

2) Updating and consulting on possible changes to the framework and processes associated with the Trade Union Act , to reduce paperburden and promote more efficient case management.

3) Completing surveys on client satisfaction focussing on the delivery of conciliation services.

4) Reviewing the preventive mediation programs and revising them where necessary.

5) Continue to implement Fire Prevention Act and associated regulations.

6) Implementation of the Power Engineers and Crane Operators Regulations.

7) Implement recommendations for the regulation of propane and natural gases.

8) Continue to work on changes to OHS regulations.

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CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

- Legislative Enforcement: Inspect and investigate workplaces, building and equipment to ensure compliance and enforcement with health, safety and employment laws.

- Communications: Provide education, communications and consultation on legislative and regulatory initiatives and effective prevention measures.

- Effective Dispute Resolution: Provide mediation and conciliation services that promote effective workplace relationships by and utilizing alternative dispute resolution techniques.

- Setting Standards: Working with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to develop effective codes and standards that maximize safety and improve business compliance.

- Advice: Providing advice and assistance to individuals and organizations to assist injured workers in relation to the department's legislative mandate and services.

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BUDGETING CONTEXT

- The 1999-2000 department priorities have been designed to support and ensure the delivery of the major program areas.

- The department's primary role is one of "acting in a regulatory capacity". The department's major responsibility is to ensure compliance with its various statutory and regulatory obligations.

- The regulatory nature of the department drives the budget demand and establsished the priorities on which the budget is founded.

- In order to deliver the major programs, 85% of the department's net budget has been allocated to salaries and benefits and to the financial assistance programs (largely WCB).

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CORPORATE LINKAGES / PARTNERSHIPS

INITIATIVE	PARTNER(S)	PURPOSE
Employment and Safety Legislation Harmonization	Other Atlantic Provinces	The development of a process for developing legislation on an Atlantic basis and participating in selected projects to further this initiative.
Certification Program	Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association APENS Forest Safety Society Nova Scotia Fire Service	The department co-sponsors voluntary certification programs with our partners to improve occupational health and safety standards in various industries.
Non Binding Voluntary Arbitration Program	Voluntary Economic Planning Labour-Management Forum	Provide an option which is efficient and as cost effective as traditional arbitration while improving labour/management relations.
Training Initiatives Partnerships	Employers/Unions	The OSH Division will be providing technical training to staff and has approached professional associations, employees and unions to determine their interest in participating in the training to defray costs.
Computerized Inspection Tracking System	Titan Technology Ltd.	Commercialization of programs to North American jurisdictions.
	Professional Groups /	A project focused on getting health and safety principles into the

Project Minerva	Universities / Canadian Society of Safety Engineering	professional education programs in management and engineering.
CCOHS	Other Jurisdictions	The department funds the inquiry desk on a per capita basis with all other Canadian jurisdictions to ensure that employers and employees can access a no cost information service to answer OSH questions.
Fire Investigation System	Office of the Fire Marshal / Arson Investigation Association / Arson Prevention Council / Insurance Industry / Canadian Fire Investigation School	Providing a fire investigation system through the training of local fire investigators.
Harmonization of Elevator Standards (under development)	Other Jurisdictions/Industry	Harmonization of elevator standards to form one binational standard.
Employment Standards Awareness	Industry / Education Organizations / Labour Standards Division	To educate employers and employees on the minimum standards of employment in Nova Scotia.
Learn Not To Burn Program	Burn Prevention Association Schoolboards / Dept.of Education / Fire Departments	To provide education to elementary and junior high school students on fire safety
Safe-T-Rider	Elevator Industry / Schoolboards	To promote escalator safety to children.
Bargaining Committee Education Program for First-Contract Negotiations	Labour Groups / Management Groups	A voluntary program focusing on the education of union and management bargaining committees by reviewing the role of conciliators and the conciliation process.

Self-Regulation of Propane Industry / Electrical Contractors	Propane Industry / Electrical Contractors / Office of the Fire Marshal	To create an accountability framework in the propane and electrical contracting industries that will lead to industry self regulation.
Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Program	Justice Children's Aid Mental Health Professionals Police Departments Fire Departments	Intervention to prevent repeat fire setting by youths through multi agency action.

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OUTCOMES AND OUTCOME MEASURES

Note: The Department has undertaken a review of its mission, vision, goals and core business functions and this is reflected in this document. However the tying of these goals to the outcomes measures in this section of the draft business is incomplete at this stage of the business plan development for 1999 / 2000. We still consider the outcomes measures as outlined here as accurately reflecting ongoing activities in the Department.

1998-1999 Outcome Measures

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COMMUNICATIONS

Key Messages

1. The department is committed to keeping Nova Scotians healthy and safe -- both in the workplace and through public safety efforts.

   For example:

   An expanded Occupational Health and Safety division is using education as the primary tool in improving health and safety in the workplace. The department is backing those educational efforts up with enforcement. Our officers are committed to ensuring that every Nova Scotia worker arrives home safely each and every day of the year.

   We are preparing to introduce a new Fire Prevention Act and have increased fire safety training to help protect people and property from devastating fire losses.

   New rules for safe operation of cranes, elevators, boilers and pressure vessels will help protect Nova Scotians.

2. Nova Scotia injured workers deserve fair treatment, fair pay and respect. They deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing they will be looked after if they are injured on the job.

   For example:

   Implementing the recommendations from both the Auditor General's audit of WCAT, WAP and WCB and the Select Committee into the WCB will be a priority.

   Faster, better investigation and advice to workers on employment issues is a priority.

   Injured workers receive advice and support with their Workers' Compensation Board appeals through the Workers' Advisers Program.

3. The Department of Labour plays a major role in Nova Scotia's big picture: improving quality of life; creating a climate for investment and job creation; and giving the people of this province security, prosperity and hope for the

future.

For example.

We foster respectful relationships between Nova Scotia workers and their employers. A healthy labour-management climate is good for business, workers and our economy. It helps attract investment and jobs.

We are harmonizing our legislative requirements to national and international standards -- ensuring maximum safety and effective compliance for business, while preparing them to compete in the global marketplace.

4. Overall, we are committed to improving service to Nova Scotians, listening to concerns, and working together.

   For example:

   We have developed partnerships with organizations such the Workers' Compensation Board, the Retail Gasoline Dealers Association and the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association to improve occupational health and safety performance in specific sectors. Through these partnerships, we can promote the department's mission in an economic and effective way.

   We are improving front-line decision-making and customer service through training, teamwork and application of appropriate technology. This continuous improvement and validation of our service is one of our departmental goals. We want to be responsive to the needs of Nova Scotians.

Key Audiences

1. Nova Scotia employers
2. Nova Scotia workers
3. Labour organizations and other employee associations
4. Business and other employer/management associations
5. Professional/industry associations (ie. Barristers' Society, NSCSA)
6. Other interest groups (ie. Nova Scotia Safety Council, fire service)
7. Departmental employees
8. Government employees
9. Department advisory councils (OHS and Fire Prevention)
10. MLAs
11. Media

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HUMAN RESOURCES - FINANCE CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

Initiatives 1999-2000

The Human Resources Division is responsible for providing services in a number of areas including recruitment and selection, compensation, benefits, labour relations, occupational health and safety, performance management, attendance management and training and development. During 1999-2000 the following key initiatives will be undertaken.

The role of the Information Technology Division of the Corporate Services Unit is to provide technology services to meet its client's needs. This includes standardized servers and hardware and software products. Management and development of the government's Corporate Financial Management System (CFMS) is a major responsibility of the Division. Other services include hardware and software assessment, acquisition, installation and support, network support, business analysis services, application development and support, project management and tender preparation for systems related projects. During 1999-2000 the following key initiatives will be undertaken to support the Department of Labour:

- Improve the service in human resource program delivery.
- Deliver training and provide consultative support to managers in performance management for implementation of the Integrated Management Development Program (IMD).
- Promote and support participation in training in labour relations for managers.
- Establish goals/plans for management of short term illness and LTD in support of the implementation of corporate disability management policy.

Information Technology

Key Initiatives

- Completion of the Year 2000 projects as they relate to applications and the technical architecture of the Department of Labour. This would include compliancy in the areas of servers, personal computers, communications (LAN) and applications.

- In partnership with Occupational Health and Safety the CSU will work on a project to replace the existing Inspection Tracking System.

- Continue to improve and evolve the IT support and development services of the Corporate Service Unit through various initiative such as;

  - expansion of the IT CSU's helpdesk services to encompass Business Solutions and CFMS support services

  - implementation of the new LAN security policy for all users within the department

  - continue the roll out of the new organizational model for the delivery of business solutions

  - increase support services to include the new government wide capital asset management system

  - continue to offer the latest versions of software tools such as Windows95 and Groupwise5

  - development of a formal Disaster Recovery Strategy

- Ongoing support, enhancements and maintenance of all applications and technical infrastructure in order to maximize the department's investment in technology

Financial Services

The role of the Financial Services division of the Corporate Services Unit is to provide day-to-day managing of accounting transactions and to provide financial planning advice and analysis to support business decisions within our client departments. During 1999-2000 the following key initiatives will be undertaken to support the Department of Labour:

- Continue to develop and implement an appropriate organizational structure which will support the financial and service delivery requirements of the

Department of Labour.

- Continue to identify financial procedures and processes within the Department of Labour for potential change based on accepted accounting standards and "best" business practices.

- Meet the department's needs with respect to financial analysis in business case development, user fee recoveries, cost/benefit analysis, and other projects.

- Develop a plan for implementation of the corporate Central Services Billing Policy.

- Increase efficiency in the management of capital assets by utilizing the Asset Management Module of the Corporate Financial Management System (CFMS) in accordance with the corporate Tangible Capital Assets Policy.

- Implement the Accounts Receivable module of the Corporate Financial Management System to ensure accurate recording of accounts receivable and increased quality of financial information. As well, the implementation of this module provides for Accounts Receivable Year 2000 readiness.

- Investigate options available, in partnership with the Department of Business & Consumer Services, to utilize their account collection expertise with Department of Labour's receivable accounts.

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